



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

VALERIE ERVIN  
COUNCILMEMBER  
DISTRICT 5

August 4, 2009

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs  
Mr. James A. Adkins, Secretary  
Mr. Wilbert Forbes, Deputy Secretary  
The Jeffrey Building, 4th Floor  
16 Francis Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Secretary Adkins and Deputy Secretary Forbes:

I am writing to propose an innovative partnership between Montgomery County and the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs focused on therapeutic golf for veterans at Sligo Creek Golf Course in Silver Spring, Maryland. This publicly owned, nine-hole golf course faces an uncertain future because of the fiscal constraints confronting Montgomery County. One option being considered by some county lawmakers would close the Sligo Creek Golf Course on October 1, 2009. Instead of losing this valuable community asset, I propose that the course begin to serve veterans, especially those who are returning home from Afghanistan and Iraq with injuries that can be ameliorated by golf.

As you may know, a similar model can be found in Washington at the American Lake Veterans Golf Course ([www.alvetsgolfcourse.com](http://www.alvetsgolfcourse.com)), which is dedicated to providing, teaching and promoting the benefits of golf to veterans including those who are receiving medical care and outpatient veterans who have disabilities. The goal of creating a similar partnership in Montgomery County would be to provide a therapeutic environment where all golfers can enjoy the benefits of golf, such as exercise and relaxation, in a positive and accepting social environment.

At the American Lake Veterans Golf Course, hospital in-patients and their guests have first priority on the course. Persons in possession of a Veterans Universal Access

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Identification Card and their guests may also use the course. In addition, active duty and retired military with military identification cards and their guests may play on the course. Military hospital in-patients play at no cost, and golf clubs, balls, tees and carts are also provided free of charge. Authorized military personnel are required to pay green and cart fees. The course is open seven days a week, except during the holiday season. Tee times are not required and golfers play on a first-come, first-served basis.

It is my understanding that the American Lake Golf Course is operated and maintained by an all volunteer force consisting of grounds crews, maintenance personnel, operating staff and management personnel. This course is not supported by government funds and operating and capital costs are paid for with annual pass and daily green fee revenues. Friends of American Lake Veterans Golf Course, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, also raises funds to support the course. For example, they are currently raising \$5.5 million for a new rehabilitation center.

Sligo Creek Golf Course is the only publicly owned, nine-hole golf course inside the beltway, and it is located only five miles from the National Naval Medical Center and three miles from Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Also, many military families live in the Washington Metropolitan Area and could conveniently take advantage of this resource.

There is strong support for maintaining the Sligo Creek Golf Course in the neighboring community and among golfers throughout Montgomery County. Many residents have banded together to form a non-profit organization to help save the course, and more information can be found at [www.savesligogolf.com](http://www.savesligogolf.com).

Sligo Creek Golf Course serves an important community need and its closure would be detrimental to Montgomery County. Re-establishing another golf course inside the beltway would be nearly impossible and an extremely expensive task. Despite Montgomery County's dire budget constraints this year, I believe that we cannot be short-sighted about preserving this important community resource over the long-term.

These trying economic times call on all of us to think creatively. When I saw the information about the American Lake View Golf Course, I knew this model is something I wanted to explore for Sligo Creek Golf Course. While public use and golf course access must be maintained, I know that by working together we can come up with a plan to make the course an even greater community resource.

On a personal note, I grew up in a military family. I know what soldiers and their families go through each and every day to serve our country. I think this proposed partnership is a small way that I can help to give something back to those who have given so much.

I would love the opportunity to take you and appropriate staff members on a tour of Sligo Creek Golf Course and to talk more about potential partnership opportunities. Please contact me at your earliest convenience, so that we can begin discussing what is possible for our soldiers and Montgomery County residents at the Sligo Creek Golf Course.

Sincerely,



Valerie Ervin

Montgomery County Councilmember, District 5

cc: Anthony Brown, Lt. Governor  
Isiah Leggett, County Executive  
Phil Andrews, County Council President  
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